The Vital Consensus:
American Attitudes on Economic Growth

A Survey Conducted by
Roger Seasonwein Associates, Inc.
for Union Carbide Corporation

Corporate Communications Department
270 Park Avenue
New York, New York 10017

Table of Contents

Introduction i

Preface iii

Executive Summary vii

1 The meaning of the term *economic growth* 1

2 The likelihood and desirability of growth 5

3 What is hindering, helping growth 13

4 Corporate profits 25

5 Imports and the balance of payments 35

6 The size and role of the federal government 47

7 Technical appendix 59

Demographic composition of the sample 59

The questionnaire 60

Introduction

The following study of American attitudes toward economic growth was commissioned by Union Carbide Corporation in the fall of 1979. The survey was conducted by Roger Seasonwein Associates, Inc., of New Rochelle, New York. This report includes the wording of each question, responses by the entire sample, and — when these are analytically significant — responses by demographic categories. The narrative and analysis were prepared by Union Carbide, and the entire report was reviewed for accuracy by Roger Seasonwein Associates.

The wording of each question appears next to the table reporting responses. In some tables, percentages may not add to 100% either because of rounding into whole numbers or because the question permitted multiple responses. A summary of the responses reported in each section appears at the beginning of Sections 1 through 6. Section 7 presents the responses for all questions in the order in which they were asked as well as technical information about sample size and possible margins of sampling error.

Two simultaneous surveys were conducted between September 26 and October 28, 1979, among matched national probability samples of Americans 18 years and older. One thousand interviews were completed in each of the two surveys. Interviews were conducted by telephone from the Seasonwein Associates headquarters in about 1,000 communities in 300 county assignments representative of the contiguous United States. A 71% cooperation rate among households in the probability sample was obtained.

Preface

As the United States moves into the decade of the 1980's, the American people face an uncertain and dangerous world. Inflation, stagnant productivity, lack of economic growth, and frustrating dependence on raw materials from unstable and often hostile nations have conspired to dim the traditionally bright future that Americans have come to expect.

Few American leaders seem able to find and describe workable solutions to these problems. Some advocate expanding government programs and restraints on private enterprise; others would reduce the size and scope of government and renew reliance on private initiative. Still others announce the end of two centuries of economic growth and counsel Americans to lower their expectations.

This lack of agreement about the direction that public policy should take in the 1980's is not limited to political leaders. As are many in the media and the business world, economists are also divided about which course to follow. Simply put, as the new decade begins there is little apparent sign of the consensus that must underlie effective public policies on economic growth and the role of the government.

Union Carbide and all of its constituents have a stake in what the nation and its leaders decide to do about these problems. How well our company performs will depend in large part on how well public policies and programs work to keep our economy growing. And Union Carbide's success will have direct and important effects on the lives and livelihoods of our employees, suppliers, customers, retirees, stockholders and neighbors. Given these facts, Union Carbide believes that we, together with other members of our society, have an obligation to speak out on these critical issues and help build consensus on public policies that affect our businesses and the economy as a whole. Because public opinion will determine the environment in which this consensus will be built, Union Carbide commissioned in late 1979 a public opinion survey to see how the American public felt about the issues of economic growth and the role of the government. And because we believe that the results of this survey will be useful in the building of consensus and the shaping of effective policies, we are offering to share it with the public.

The study reveals that most Americans associate economic growth with benefits to individuals and especially with increased employment and financial security. Not surprisingly, most Americans are strongly in favor of economic growth and see it as benefiting themselves as well as the entire nation. Although Americans say that growth can increase pollution, taxes and prices, they nevertheless strongly support the idea of continued economic expansion and see the lack of growth as an undesirable alternative.

While Americans strongly support economic growth and want more of it in the future, they are pessimistic about what they expect the future will actually bring. They believe that growth has already slowed and that the country will see little or no growth in the next five years. And they have little faith that any agency or force will reverse this trend.

The American public overwhelmingly attributes this dim economic future to a cluster of forces: energy, inflation, over-large, costly and inefficient government, excessive imports, and a weakening of the American work ethic and entrepreneurial spirit. But while all these forces are blamed for lagging growth, it is clear that the government is seen as the main institutional cause for the decline in our economy.

Government is seen as being wasteful, bloated, inefficient and costly, and as an inherently negative factor in economic growth. Americans believe that government programs should be cut back (with the exception of environmental and health programs), and they support a variety of methods of limiting and shrinking government.

But if Americans see the reduction of government's role in the economy as a first step in achieving economic growth, they are less clear about what steps should follow reductions in government programs and in the level of taxes. Because they see imports as preventing economic growth, a lowering of government protection from foreign goods would not be supported. And because they are not confident that American businessmen are still strong competitors or will voluntarily use expanded profits to invest in growth, they are not enthusiastic about across-the-board reductions in the burden of government regulation and taxation on business.

Given these perceptions of government, business, and foreign trade, it is not surprising that Americans are pessimistic about economic growth in the 1980's. On the one hand, they want growth because they see it as bringing more jobs, rising incomes, and general prosperity. On the other hand, given the forces at work and their lack of trust in any single institution to find and implement a successful strategy, they see little chance for growth.

Although Americans are pessimistic about the ability of each of their institutions individually to foster growth, the survey revealed that they strongly believe that, by working together, our institutions can overcome the barriers to economic growth. For example, almost nine out of ten Americans support the strategy of government's lowering business taxes *if* such tax cuts are directly linked to increased business spending on plants, machinery, and jobs. To Americans, such government policy would lower the tax burden on business not as a favor to business; it would lower the tax burden conditionally on business' providing more of the jobs and other benefits that economic growth means to all Americans.

The results of this survey are encouraging for all concerned Americans. Despite the dim economic outlook, our nation is still strongly committed to economic growth. And despite the lack of clear solutions, it is committed to using the energies of business and consumers, as guided by government policy, to achieve that growth. The public believes that such economic policies deserve broad and lasting support. And, if history is any guide, such support is the first step in shaping successful economic policy.

Executive Summary

The first three sections of this report concern economic growth, and the last three sections cover closely related subjects: corporate profits and taxes, imports, and the size of the federal government.

Americans define *economic growth* in positive economic terms and characterize its absence with words like *recession*. (Section 1)

Eight Americans in ten want the nation's economy to grow in the next five years. Half of this majority opts for strong growth, and the other half wants moderate expansion. Americans support economic growth because they feel it directly benefits the average American by making available more and better jobs and higher salaries and wages. Growth is not seen as a panacea: The major negative factors that accompany growth are perceived as high prices and taxes and pollution. Although Americans want growth, they are pessimistic about achieving it in the next five years. Only one in five feel the economy will grow substantially in this period. (Section 2)

The factors that Americans see holding back growth are inflation, the energy situation, and government. To a lesser extent, the public blames excessive reliance on imports and a decline in both the work ethic and entrepreneurial risk-taking. American technology and "know-how" gets the most credit as a factor helping the economy grow. A plurality feels that major corporations also encourage growth, making business the only one of three institutions measured (the others being labor unions and government) that is viewed in a favorable way. (Section 3)

Americans express ambivalent attitudes toward profits. On one hand, they feel high profits are needed for growth. On the other, they feel profits are higher than necessary. Nevertheless, a tax reduction for corporations is favored by 51% to 40%, with support rising to 86%-11% when the cut is directly linked to making more money available for increasing jobs. Support for a tax cut in the absence of this specific link to employment probably reflects two beliefs: A plurality of Americans sees the average person benefiting when profits go up and also views corporations as the only institution, among those measured, that is helping economic growth rather than holding it back. (Section 4)

Most Americans regard imports as one of the factors slowing growth and consider the nation's trade deficit as a major problem. Although they are most inclined to blame the trade deficit on unfair tactics by foreign nations, many also feel this nation is bested because many foreign products offer superior values and because many other nations have a harder driven, better motivated work force. The public is highly protectionist, with trade restrictions supported by two in three. (Section 5)

Consistent with the belief that government is the institution most to blame for slowing growth, Americans feel that government is larger than it should be and that it ought to be cut back. Two exceptions are measured by the survey. First, most people want stronger government regulations to protect health, safety, and the environment. Although the public is willing to pay for this, it does indicate that it wants government actions tempered by consideration of economic consequences. And, second, Americans are willing to support government programs that help business grow and create new jobs. (Section 6)

1 The Meaning of the Term *Economic Growth*

Introduction and Summary

As a way of introducing the subject of economic growth to respondents, the survey began with questions related to the meaning of the phrase *economic growth*. People who said they had heard of the term were then asked to define it in their own words, spontaneous associations to the phrase thus being elicited before other questions were asked.

Seven Americans in 10 say they have heard of the term *economic growth*, and 55% respond when asked to define it. Their responses relate economic growth to conditions that exist when the economy is healthy. Those who had heard of *economic growth* were also asked to describe its opposite and did so primarily by words like *recession, depression,* and *economic decline*. The answers to these initial questions about definitions of *economic growth* foreshadow the positive attitudes toward growth that are documented in the next chapter.

Sixty-eight percent of the public reports having heard of the phrase *economic growth*.

Table 1
Have you ever heard or read the phrase *economic growth*, or is this a term you are not familiar with?

Have heard or read phrase *economic growth*	68%
Have not	32

Respondents saying they recognize the phrase *economic growth* were asked both to say what it means and also to name the phrase that describes the opposite of growth. Both of these questions were "open ended": Respondents answered in their own words.

More than half the public gives a definition of *economic growth*, and nineteen percent say the term means that the economy is growing, expanding, or increasing. Most of those giving a definition associate growth with a wide variety of specific conditions related

to a healthy economy. Those mentioned by five percent or more of the public are: an increase in the gross national product, business growth, increased buying power and income, stability of the dollar, and high employment.

Table 2
(If familiar with the term) What would you say the term *economic growth* means—how would you define it?
(Respondents answered in their own words.)

Gave definition	**55%**
Economy is growing, expanding, increasing	19
Increase in gross national product	8
Growth in business	8
Increased buying power and income	6
Stability of the dollar	5
High rate of employment	5
Increased productivity	4
Stable economic situation, sound growth	3
Prosperity	2
Any mention of economic trends over several years	1
Proper efficient use of resources	1
All other comments related to the economy	4
Nonresponsive comments	**1**
Don't know	**11**
Not asked question because not familiar with term *economic growth*	**32**

Base: Percentages based on total sample

Asked for a definition of the opposite of *economic growth*, 54% of the public gives one. The three closely related economic conditions most frequently mentioned are all associated with a less than healthy economy: recession (named by 22%), depression (17%), and economic decline or stagnation (13%).

Table 3
(If familiar with the term) What phrase would you say describes the opposite of *economic growth*? (Respondents answered in their own words.)

Gave definition	**54%**
Recession	22
Depression	17
Economic decline, stagnation	13
Inflation	4
Lower standard of living	1
Unemployment	1
Lowered productivity	1
Lowered production	1
High rate of bankruptcy	1
Government overspending	1
All other comments related to the economy*	2
Nonresponsive comments	**1**
Don't know	**14**
Not asked because not familiar with term *economic growth*	**32**

*Includes all categories mentioned by fewer than 0.5%.

Base: Percentages based on total sample

These requests for definitions began the survey's inquiry about economic growth. Because the term is somewhat technical and because it was hypothesized in advance of the survey that a significant number of Americans would not be able to volunteer a definition, a brief explanation was given after respondents were asked for their own definitions and before the survey continued. This explanation was: "For the purposes of our conversation, let's define *economic growth* as a growing and expanding economy. I mean growing and expanding overall, even though there may be temporary recessions or slowdowns."

2 The Likelihood and Desirability of Growth

Introduction and Summary

Americans express pessimistic attitudes about the nation's future economic growth. Since most Americans are in favor of economic expansion and consider growth desirable, the fact that many believe we have already entered a period of decline—in which the country will see little or no growth in the next five years—is an understandable cause of pessimism. Looking ahead to the next five years, the American public has little hope that the economy actually will expand significantly: Most say America enjoyed no better than moderate expansion in recent years, and they expect even less growth in the next five years.

Despite their pessimism, eight Americans in ten say they *want* the economy to grow, with half of this majority opting for strong growth and the other half desiring moderate expansion. Support for growth cuts across all demographic groups. Most Americans want economic expansion because they feel it benefits them personally, primarily by bringing with it more and better jobs. When asked what they associate with a growing economy, almost half of those surveyed voluntarily cite increased employment as the primary consequence of growth, and two out of three say economic expansion makes their own lives more peaceful. Although they agree that increased pollution and higher taxes or prices accompany an expanding economy, Americans believe they are personally better off when the economy grows.

An outright majority of Americans believes that things are "going badly" in this country at the present time, and one in six says they are "going very badly."

Table 4

Generally speaking, would you say that things are going extremely well in this country, pretty well, pretty badly, or very badly?

	%
Extremely well	2
Pretty well	35
Pretty badly	45
Very badly	16
Don't know	2

Looking back to the last two or three years, a significant minority (one out of four) believes that the nation had already entered a period of slow or no growth before the present recession began. Looking ahead to the next five years, most expect things to get worse rather than better. Whereas one in four says we saw little or no expansion in the recent past, almost twice as many (46%) expect little growth or none at all during the next five years.

Table 5

As you know, the country is in a recession or economic slowdown right now. Thinking back to the two or three years *before* this recession or slowdown, is it your feeling that the economy was then growing a great deal, a good deal, a fair amount, not too much, or not at all?

Is it your feeling that in the next five years the American economy will grow a great deal, a good deal, a fair amount, not too much, or not at all?

	Economy growing last two or three years	Economy will grow next five years
A great/good deal	**26%**	**19%**
A great deal	10	8
A good deal	16	11
Fair amount	**43**	**29**
Not too much/not at all	**26**	**46**
Not too much	22	34
Not at all	3	13
Don't know	**5**	**6**

The conviction that our country has witnessed little or no economic growth during the last two or three years is strongest in the Northeast, where one out of three say the country has not grown very much recently; it is least marked in the South and the West, where twice as many respondents as in the Northeast say the

economy has grown a great or good deal recently. Those who attended college are least likely to say that the economy has grown a great or good deal during the last few years.

Table 6
Thinking back to two or three years before this recession or slowdown, is it your feeling that the economy was then growing a great deal, a good deal, a fair amount, not too much, or not at all?

		A great good deal	*A fair amount*	*Not too much not at all*	*Don't know*
TOTAL		26%	43%	26%	5%
Region	Northeast	16	45	34	5
	Midwest	24	45	25	6
	South	33	40	23	4
	West	30	45	20	5
Age	18-34	28	42	27	3
	35-54	26	45	26	4
	55 or older	25	43	24	9
Education	Less	33	34	24	9
	High school graduate	30	42	24	4
	Some college or more	21	47	28	4
Total household income	$ 7,500 or less	27	38	26	8
	7,501-12,500	27	40	27	6
	12,501-20,000	24	49	25	2
	Over $20,000	25	44	27	4

Attitudes about how much growth there should be in the next five years contrast sharply with feelings about how much growth there actually will be. Whereas almost one out of two (46%) doubts America actually will experience substantial expansion during the next five years, 83% feel growth would actually be best for this country. Put another way, eight out of ten reject the idea of "lowered expectations."

Table 7
Is it your feeling that in the next five years the American economy will grow a great deal, a good deal, a fair amount, not too much, or not at all?

Thinking about how much the economy should grow in the next five years, is it your feeling that it would be best for this country if the economy grew a great deal, a good deal, a fair amount, not too much, or not at all in the next five years?

	Economy will grow next five years	*Economy should grow next five years*
A great/good deal	**19%**	**41%**
A great deal	8	20
A good deal	11	21
Fair amount	**29**	**42**
Not too much/not at all	**46**	**13**
Not too much	34	11
Not at all	13	2
Don't know	**6**	**4**

There is strong support for growth among Americans no matter where they live and regardless of their gender, age, or education and income levels. Those with household incomes of $7,500 or less apparently give the lowest level of support to growth—and 71% of these respondents endorse at least a moderate growth level (35% say a "great" or "good deal"; 36% a "fair amount").

Table 8
Thinking about how much the economy should grow in the next five years, is it your feeling that it would be best for this country if the economy grew a great deal, a good deal, a fair amount, not too much, or not at all in the next five years?

		How economy *should* grow in next five years			
		A great good deal	*A fair amount*	*Not too much not at all*	*Don't know*
TOTAL		41%	42%	13%	4%
Region	Northeast	44	43	10	4
	Midwest	34	46	15	4
	South	41	41	14	4
	West	48	35	14	3
Sex	Male	39	45	14	2
	Female	43	39	13	6
Age	18-34	45	39	14	3
	35-54	40	46	12	2
	55 or older	37	42	14	7
Education	Less	41	39	15	6
	High school graduate	41	41	15	4
	Some college or more	42	44	11	3
Total household income	$ 7,500 or less	35	36	21	8
	7,501-12,500	43	41	11	6
	12,501-20,000	43	44	11	2
	Over $20,000	42	45	11	2

Most Americans believe an expanding economy benefits them personally

Americans want economic expansion because they see a direct link between the growth of the economy as a whole and their own lives. A majority (56%) feels growth brings an improved standard of living

for most people, and a near majority (49%) feels their own personal economic situation gets better when the economy grows. Only 17% say growth adversely affects the standard of living of the "average person," and only 14% say growth hurts them personally.

Table 9
Is it your feeling that the standard of living of the average person in this country gets better, worse, or stays about the same when the economy grows?

Is it your feeling that your own personal economic situation gets better, worse, or stays about the same when the economy grows?

	How growth affects "average person's" living standard	*How growth affects "your own personal" economic situation*
Gets better	56%	49%
Stays the same	25	35
Gets worse	17	14
Don't know	2	3

The college educated, those with higher incomes, and those under 55 are more likely than others to see a direct connection between their own living standard and the general course of the economy. Among older Americans and the less educated, many seemingly feel that their own lives are not touched very much when the economy grows. In every demographic group, however, only a small minority—no more than one in six—goes so far as to say that growth adversely affects their own personal economic situation.

Table 10
Is it your feeling that your own personal economic situation gets better, worse, or stays about the same when the economy grows?

		Gets better	*Stays the same*	*Gets worse*	*Don't know*
TOTAL		49%	35%	14%	3%
Age	18–34	51	32	14	3
	35–54	55	30	13	2
	55 or older	38	44	14	5
Education	Less	31	48	17	4
	High school	42	40	16	3
	Some college or more	60	26	10	3
Total household income	$ 7,500 or less	26	54	17	3
	7,501–12,500	37	42	16	5
	12,501–20,000	53	29	15	3
	Over $20,000	62	28	9	2

To probe more deeply into why Americans feel the way they do about economic growth, two additional series of questions were asked. In the first of these groups of questions, respondents were asked to state in their own words what they feel are the most important results both of growth and of the absence of growth. In the second set of questions, respondents were read a list of items and asked which ones accompany a growing economy.

The answers to the open-ended question about the most important results of a growing economy indicate again that Americans strongly associate the word *growth* with economic benefits to the individual. Higher employment is the main benefit to individuals mentioned. A near majority (44%) names more opportunity for employment as the main result of economic expansion. In addition, many equate growth with two other effects of increased employment: a better balance between income and spending (13%) and increased buying power (12%). In addition to tying economic expansion directly to their own lives, 17% also perceive growth as benefiting business and 3% as benefiting government. Virtually no respondents identify any negative consequences of economic expansion in answering this open-ended question.

Table 11

For the purpose of our conversation, let's define economic growth as a growing and expanding economy. I mean growing and expanding overall, even though there may be temporary recessions or slowdowns. What would you say are the one or two most important things that happen when the economy is growing and expanding? Or, to put it another way, what are the one or two most important results of a growing economy? (Respondents answered in their own words.)

	What happens when the economy grows
Individuals	**63%**
More employment	44
Better balance between personal income and spending	13
Increased buying power	12
General rise in living standard	9
People are optimistic	7
Other responses mentioning how people benefit	4
Business	**17**
Expanded/increased business	8
Greater productivity	4
More capital available	3
Increased trade with other countries	3
Other responses mentioning how business benefits	*
Government	**3**
Budget can be balanced	*
More confidence in government	1
Other responses mentioning how the government benefits	2
General economy	**12**
Prosperity	5
Stabilizing inflation	5
Stabilizing dollar	2
Don't know	**21**

*Note: Fewer Than .05%.

Not surprisingly, the second open-ended question of this section found that respondents describe the consequences of "no growth" as being almost exactly the opposite of the results of expansion. A plurality of respondents names more employment as the main consequence of growth, and a near majority (48%) similarly volunteers unemployment as the main result of no growth. Significant minorities also describe inflation (14%), decreased buying power (14%), and a lower standard of living (11%), as specific results of no growth. Just as respondents spontaneously relate growth to their own lives, so they also mention the ways in which they are personally harmed by a lack of growth. And, as seen in Section 1, virtually no one sees benefits accruing to himself when the economy does not grow.

Table 12
And when the economy does not grow, what would you say are the one or two most important things that happen? (Respondents answered in their own words.)

Individuals	**65%**
Unemployment	48
Decreased buying power	14
Lower standard of living	11
Discontent/restlessness	8
High prices	7
Increased crime	4
Other responses mentioning how people harmed	2
Business	**8**
Business failures	4
Higher interest rates for business	4
Other responses mentioning problems for business	1
Government	**5**
Lack of confidence in government	5
General economy	**34**
Inflation	14
Financial standstill	9
Recession	9
Depression	5
Don't know	**17**

When Americans are asked which of a list of specific conditions are associated with a growing economy, their responses are similar to those elicited by the open-ended questions. The largest number (83%) agrees that economic expansion encourages capital investment. Three of the top five items that people feel "generally happen" when the economy is growing or expanding relate to employment or jobs—more jobs (81%), higher wages and salaries (77%), and better jobs (74%).

On the negative side, some three in four feel that a growing economy brings with it higher taxes and prices as well as increased pollution and crowding. And only one in five agrees that economic growth leads to lower prices. It is important to note that—although Americans did not immediately think of growth's negative features when asked a general, open-ended question—when given a list of choices, many clearly do agree that there are problems as well as many benefits associated with economic expansion.

In addition to being asked which items broadly characterize a growing economy, respondents were asked to indicate which "happen to people like you" when the economy grows. In most cases, a larger number agrees that prosperity helps the "whole country" than those agreeing that it touches their own lives. An exception to this is the 63% who feel that growth makes their own lives more peaceful. This is consistent with the drop in the percentage naming pollution and crowding as happening to people like themselves as a result of growth. In contrast, a 61% majority feels that more or bigger government programs generally accompany economic growth, but agreement drops to 40% when the question asks about government programs that "provide money for people like you."

Table 13

I am going to read down a list of items. As I do, please say "yes" only for those that you feel generally happen when the economy is growing and expanding. For others, say "no."

Now I'm going to read down that list of items again. This time only say "yes" for those things that you feel happen to people like *you* when the economy is growing and expanding. Remember, say "yes" only if you feel an item will affect *you* personally. Otherwise, say "no."

When the economy is growing and expanding . . .

	Generally happens	*Happens to "people like you"*
Businesses (that affect me) can afford to buy better machines that make products more efficiently	83%	74%
More jobs are available	81	64
Wages and salaries are higher	77	71
Taxes are higher	75	77
Better jobs are available	74	64
Prices are higher	73	77
There's more pollution and crowding	73	64
There are more or bigger government programs (that provide money for people like me)	61	40
The way people (like me) live is more peaceful	51	63
Worse jobs are available	32	29
Fewer jobs are available	27	27
Prices are lower	22	20
Wages and salaries are lower	19	20
Taxes are lower	18	18

3 What Is Hindering, Helping Growth?

Introduction and Summary

American opinons about the factors helping or hindering growth in this country provide additional evidence of widespread public pessimism about the future of the economy. Just as most Americans are convinced that the country has entered a period of little or no growth, so they also express definite opinions as to the causes of this economic slowdown. And, since few voluntarily identify countervailing agencies or forces that will help the economy to grow, they fail to see any strong reasons for optimism.

The American public attributes our nation's dim economic prospects primarily to inflation, the present energy situation, and large and inefficient government. To a lesser but significant extent, they also blame an excessive reliance on foreign imports and a general weakening of both the entrepreneurial spirit of innovation and the work ethic.

Americans feel that the economy suffers when the power of either labor unions, the government, or large corporations increases over a long period of time. It is clear, however, that most Americans fear big government at this time more than either labor or business. No matter how the question is phrased, the government and its actions are identified as the main institutional cause of the perceived decline in our economy. But it is extremely important to note that their feeling that government intervention harms the economy does not signify that Americans want to curb all government intervention. As reported in Section 6, public attitudes toward specific forms of government regulation vary. Most Americans say they are convinced that government regulation not only holds back the economy in general but also adds to the everyday costs paid by consumers. At the same time equally large majorities apparently think this price is worth paying in certain areas: Specifically, respondents say the government should do *more* in areas affecting the environment and consumer safety.

The pessimistic mood of the public at the present time is again revealed when respondents are asked to name the positive factors or institutions that are helping the economy grow. Only the current state of American technology and major corporations are identified as likely to help the economy grow rather than hold it back. A strong majority (63%) believes that American technology can still be relied on to foster economic growth, and a plurality (43%) also names major corporations as a cause of growth, the only institution of the three measured that Americans identify as helping the economy grow.

What is hindering growth?
Inflation, energy problems, and government are holding back the economy

Respondents were asked to tell in their own words what they feel is slowing down growth in this country and what is encouraging the economy to grow. Next, frequently encountered explanations for economic slowdown were read, and respondents were asked with which they agree.

On balance, responses to the open-ended and structured questions reinforce each other. In both cases, inflation is singled out as the single most important cause of the present economic decline followed by the energy situation, and an over-large government.

In responding to the open-ended question that asked what is hindering or helping the economy to grow, most (69%) name negative factors, and fewer (29%) mention anything that is encouraging growth. This is a further indication of public pessimism about the prospects for expansion. One in four spontaneously identifies inflation as a reason for reduced growth in this country. Many also indict the government and government spending: Sixteen percent name "big and inefficient government" as responsible for economic

slowdown, and six percent volunteer "government spending." With 13% blaming "the energy situation and "foreign oil," many also see present energy problems as a major cause of decline. No other negative factor was mentioned by 10% or more of the public.

Table 14
Why do you feel the way you do about economic growth in this country—what is slowing down growth in this country and what is encouraging the economy to grow? (Respondents answered in their own words.)

	What is slowing growth in this country
Respondents volunteering factors slowing growth	**69%**
Inflation decreased buying power	25
Big, inefficient government	16
Energy situation, foreign oil	13
Higher interest rates	7
Unemployment greater unemployment	6
Government spending	6
Not enough demand for goods	4
Labor problems	3
Dependency on foreign governments for products/materials (other than oil)	3
Dollar devalued, worth less	3
Spendthrift Americans	3
Not enough new business	2
Inefficiency in production	2
Apathy	2
Respondents volunteering factors encouraging growth	**29**
Nonresponsive comments	**3**
Don't know	**18**

Note: Table shows mentions only about what is hindering economic growth. Individual mentions by 2% or more are shown.

Most Americans are convinced there has been a marked falling off in economic growth in recent years, and they attribute this decline to inflation, energy problems, and the government. But what specific aspects of inflation and what particular actions—or lack of action—by the government are most frequently perceived as holding back our nation's economy? The sentiments beneath these spontaneously volunteered opinions were probed in two ways. A number of factors and institutions were listed, and respondents were asked both which are helping and also which are holding back the economy. Respondents were also asked whether they agreed with each of eight statements and also whether they felt the condition described was, in fact, holding down growth in this country.

When asked if each of thirteen factors is helping or hindering economic growth, at least eight out of ten indicate that inflation and the energy crisis are holding down growth, and six out of ten believe foreign imports harm the nation's economy. Large majorities name the government as a cause of economic decline, but some government actions are clearly perceived as more harmful to the nation's economy than others. More than six out of ten agree that government spending holds back growth, and 54% cite the size of the federal government. Half see regulations other than those dealing with health or the environment and taxes on individuals as harmful to growth.

While a majority sees taxes on individuals as holding growth back (51%), a plurality (41%) feels taxes on business slow growth. A plurality also names environmental protection laws and regulations as factors contributing to economic decline. This response

in part reflects the belief that environmental laws are desirable even if they are expensive: In Section 6, we shall see that overwhelming majorities say pollution laws do increase consumer costs, but most want them made more strict anyway.

With sixty-two percent faulting government spending, the government is most frequently identified as the cause of economic decline among the three institutions asked about. Nearly half (49%) cite labor unions. Although one in three (33%) name major corporations as holding back economic growth, more respondents (43%) feel corporations are helping growth.

Table 15

I am going to read down a list of items. As I do, I want you to tell me whether each one is helping the nation's economy grow, or holding back the nation's economic growth, or is having very little effect on the nation's economic growth. Is it your feeling that this item is helping this nation's economy grow, or holding growth back, or not having much of an effect on the growth of the nation's economy?

	Holding down economic growth	*Helping economic growth*
Inflation	86%	5%
The energy situation	81	8
Materials and products imported from foreign nations	63	18
Government spending	62	20
The size of the federal government	54	12
Government regulation (other than environmental laws)	51	14
The amount of taxes the average person pays	51	24
Labor unions	49	28
The amount of taxes the average business pays	41	27
Environmental protection laws and regulations	41	25
The current level of productivity in this country—how many man hours it takes to produce the average product	37	34
Major corporations	33	43
The current state of American technology, know-how, and innovation	13	63

To further test the attitudes underlying opinions about the causes of economic decline, eight statements were read to respondents. They were then asked whether they agreed with each statement and, if so, whether they felt the condition described was holding back economic growth in this country. The responses are generally consistent with those elicited by the questions reported earlier, and they also provide additional information about attitudes toward the role of business.

Three of the five items that a majority sees as slowing growth are among those already shown to be major concerns: inflation and taxes (accepted by 70% as slowing growth), government spending and deficits (65%), and foreign imports (59%). A new dimension is added by the 59% majority that agrees a decline in the work ethic is slowing growth. Almost as many (56%) agree that a reduction in risk-taking by businessmen hinders growth. A lesser level of concern about business' role is also indicated by the minority (46%) that cites a lack of competition between large companies as a cause of slower growth.

The role of taxes is seen as significant in slowing growth, but the public is inclined to fault taxes on individuals more than taxes on business. Seven out of ten thus agree that a decline in savings by individuals because of inflation and taxes is slowing growth compared to a lower, but still significant, 44% that agrees growth is slowed by high corporate taxes that leave business with insufficient funds for "new equipment and new products."

Table 16

I am going to read you some statements. Are you inclined to agree or disagree with the statement I just read?

(If agree with the statement) Are you inclined to feel the condition I just described slows down economic growth in this country, or don't you feel that this is the case?

	Agree	Agree that slows down economic growth
Inflation and taxes are greatly reducing saving by individuals.	82%	70%
The government spends more than it takes in and borrows too much.	84	65
Too many Americans just don't like to work very hard any more.	71	59
American businesses can't make a profit competing with the cheaper foreign imports that are flooding the country.	67	59
Businessmen are more afraid to take risks than they used to be.	66	56
A few big companies divide up business between them, and there is just not much competition any more.	60	46
High taxes leave businessmen with too little money to invest in new equipment and new products.	53	44
Government regulations make it necessary for businesses to devote so much money to things like cleaning up the environment and improving product safety that there is not enough money left for new equipment.	47	36

Base: Percentages based on total sample

The increasing power of unions, large corporations, and the government harms the economy.

Underlying the consistent opinion that the present size of the government harms the economy may be a public fear of all very large institutions and a belief that it is always harmful to concentrate power in a few hands. Although they feel that the government bears the main responsibility for reduced growth, most say an increase in the power of unions or of corporations also harms the economy. A near majority (45%) states that an increase in corporate power is harmful, and a majority is convinced that the American economy is harmed when the power of most labor unions (56%) or the power of the federal government (54%) increases over a long period of time.

Table 17

When the power of corporations in this country increases over a long period of time, do you think that this helps the American economy or hurts it, or do you feel that an increase in the power of corporations has very little impact on the economy?

When the power of most labor unions in this country increases over a long period of time, do you think that this helps the American economy or hurts it, or do you feel that an increase in the power of labor unions has very little impact on the economy?

When the power of the federal government in this country increases over a long period of time, do you think that this helps the American economy or hurts it, or do you feel that an increase in the power of the federal government has very little impact on the economy?

	Power of corporations increases	*Power of labor unions increases*	*Power of federal government increases*
Hurts the economy	45%	56%	54%
Helps the economy	27	23	20
Little impact	13	13	17
Don't know	15	8	9

Distrust of concentrated government power increases significantly with education and income. Those who attended college and those with household incomes of more than $20,000 are, for example, more likely than others to see any increase in government power as hurting the economy.

Table 18
When the power of the federal government in this country increases over a long period of time, do you think that this helps the American economy or hurts it, or do you feel that an increase in the power of the federal government has very little impact on the economy?

		Hurts the economy	*Helps the economy*	*Little impact*	*Don't know*
TOTAL		54	20	17	9
Age	18–34	52	24	19	5
	35–54	58	18	16	9
	55 or older	51	18	17	14
Education	Less	31	19	29	21
	High school graduate	51	22	18	10
	Some college or more	65	19	12	4
Total household income	$ 7,500 or less	36	23	23	18
	7,501–12,500	45	25	23	7
	12,501–20,000	57	21	14	8
	Over $20,000	63	17	14	7

These opinions about the power of business, labor, and government are consistent with those earlier volunteered by respondents in response to the open-ended question about what is hindering growth. Americans believe that labor and business share in the blame for reduced economic growth but that the government bears the main responsibility. Whether they are simply asked "what is slowing down growth" or whether they are presented with a number of possible reasons for economic stagnation, the responses are similar. Most Americans cite inflation, the energy situation, and government actions as the primary causes of present and future economic problems, and they perceive budgetary deficits and excessive spending as the specific government acts that are most detrimental to the economy.

What is helping growth?
American technology and major corporations seen as most helpful

Looking again at the first two questions discussed in this section sheds additional light on what Americans perceive as helping growth. Table 19 groups responses to the open-ended question, "What is slowing down growth in this country and what is encouraging the country to grow?"; it indicates the number of those making one or more comments about the role of business, labor, or government. Few respondents mention labor as either a positive or negative factor. More than twice as many believe the government is slowing growth (27%) as see the government helping the economy grow (10%). In contrast, twice as many believe that business—alone among the three institutions voluntarily mentioned by respondents—is helping the economy (13%) as believe it is holding it back (7%).

Table 19
Why do you feel the way you do about economic growth in this country—what is slowing down growth in this country and what is encouraging the economy to grow? (Respondents answered in their own words.)

	Helping the economy grow	*Slowing down economic growth*
Business—all responses mentioning business	13%	7%
Labor—all responses mentioning labor	—	3
Government—all responses mentioning government	10	27

When they are next provided with a list of factors that can help or hinder economic growth, respondents identify only two that are now encouraging the economy to grow. A majority (63%) cites American technology and innovation as presently contributing to economic growth, and a plurality (43%) names major corporations as contributing to growth—compared to 33% saying corporations hinder growth.

No other factors are seen as more likely to help the economy grow rather than hold it back. A near majority (49%) believes labor unions have a negative effect on the economy. Among government programs, environmental protection laws score best with the American public: Twenty-five percent see these as helping growth compared to 41% blaming environmental laws for slow growth. Other government actions fare less well, being seen as much more likely to hinder growth than to help the economy grow.

Table 20

I am going to read down a list of items. As I do, I want you to tell me whether each one is helping the nation's economy grow, or holding back the nation's economic growth, or is having very little effect on the nation's economic growth. Is it your feeling that these items are helping this nation's economy grow, or holding growth back, or not having much of an effect on the growth of the nation's economy?

	Helping economic growth	*Holding down growth*
The current state of American technology, know-how, and innovation	63%	13%
Major corporations	43	33
The current level of productivity in this country—how many man hours it takes to produce the average product	34	37
Labor unions	28	49
The amount of taxes the average business pays	27	41
Environmental protection laws and regulations	25	41
The amount of taxes the average person pays	24	51
Government spending	20	62
Materials and products imported from foreign nations	18	63
Government regulation (other than environmental laws)	14	51
The size of the federal government	12	54
The energy situation	8	81
Inflation	5	86

About equal numbers see the current level of productivity facilitating growth (34%) as see current productivity holding growth back (37%). And concern about productivity is also reflected in answers to two other questions. Despite the fact that almost twice as many see our present productivity as still "high" (37%) rather than "low" (19%), only 14% believe productivity is improving, and 41% say that it is actually declining from present levels. Thus, Americans perceive the current level of productivity as a problem but do not see it as now holding down growth in a major way.

Table 21

I want to ask you about what is called productivity—the number of man hours and the amount of resources it takes to produce the average product. Is it your feeling that the productivity level in this country is very high, pretty high, fair, pretty low, or very low?

High	**37%**
Very high	9
Pretty high	28
Fair	**40**
Low	**19**
Pretty low	14
Very low	5
Don't know	**5**

Is it your feeling that the level of productivity in this country is getting better, worse, or staying about the same?

Getting better	14%
Staying about the same	43
Getting worse	41
Don't know	3

4 Corporate Profits

Introduction and Summary

Americans express ambivalent attitudes toward corporate profits. They agree that some profits are needed to keep the economy going; they do not believe that a higher rate of profits will *necessarily* bring more growth than would be the case with more moderate profits. They agree that people working for companies that make high profits do better than those working for companies with low profits, but also they feel that executives benefit more than other Americans when profits are high.

Despite this ambivalence, a majority of Americans (51% to 40%) favors a reduction in corporate taxes. This majority rises dramatically (to 86%) when tax cuts for business are directly linked to increased funds for creating jobs.

Support for tax cuts as a general proposition—without an explicit link to increased funds for increasing jobs—depends on at least two factors. First, as will be seen in this section, a plurality of Americans sees the average person's standard of living going up when profits increase. Second (as discussed in Section 3), more people feel major corporations are helping economic growth than feel business is hindering growth. Since most Americans want the economy to grow and since they expect to see less growth than they want, Americans are willing to support tax cuts for business in the hope that growth will be stimulated. The sharp rise in support for cutting business taxes when a direct link is made to increasing the number of jobs available is consistent with this analysis since the most important benefit of growth is seen as an increase in the number of jobs available.

Because of their concern with the effects of declining growth those Americans that are ambivalent about profits in general clearly favor higher profits—when higher profits do result in more investment and jobs. These divided attitudes toward corporate profits will play a role in the development of public policies designed to produce stable, noninflationary growth in the American economy. The public will, for example, be very likely to favor policies that tend to maximize corporate profits when they know that these increased profits will be used to produce the new growth that Americans so strongly want.

Profits are needed—but the present level of profits is too high

The public's ambivalence toward corporate profits runs throughout their responses to five statements expressing both strongly hostile and strongly favorable attitudes toward corporate profits. When these statements are read, respondents agree with each one by the same high majority (two out of three). A large majority thus feels that business needs high profits to be able to invest in the new plants and equipment needed to maintain economic growth. But an equally large majority also agrees that "the profits business makes today are *much* higher than they need to be." Two out of three respondents similarly agree that while a booming economy does produce higher profits, these increased profits largely go to higher executive salaries and perquisites rather than benefiting the average person. But the same strong majority also believes that people do better working for a company making high profits than working for a company that makes low profits.

Table 22
I am going to read some statements. Are you inclined to agree or disagree?

	Agree	*Disagree*	*Don't know*
When the economy is booming, most of the increase is kept by business in the form of higher profits, higher executive salaries, and fat expense accounts. The average person doesn't benefit very much.	67%	28%	5%
When the economy goes down, business keeps its profits high and cuts jobs and wages.	67	29	4
All companies need to make some profits to stay in business. But the profits that businesses are making today are much higher than they need to be.	67	28	6
Without high profits, business cannot invest in the new plants and equipment needed to keep our economy going.	66	29	5
A person does better working for a company making high profits than working for a company making low profits.	63	28	9

In Sections 2 and 3, it was noted that respondents under 55 and those enjoying relatively large amounts of income and education are more likely than others both to believe that growth benefits them personally and also to blame the current lack of growth on the government. This relatively affluent and better educated group also tends to express more favorable attitudes toward corporate profits than other Americans. Among all respondents, an overall majority of 67% agrees that most of an increase in profits will accrue to business executives rather than to the average person. But, among those with household incomes of more than $20,000, only 58% express agreement, and a comparable 60% among those who attended college are inclined to agree with this statement. Whereas men and women express roughly the same attitudes about the desirability of growth, in this case women (72%) are somewhat more likely than men (62%) to agree with this statement expressing hostility to corporate profits.

Table 23

I am going to read some statements. Are you inclined to agree or disagree? ... When the economy is booming, most of the increase is kept by business in the form of higher profits, higher executive salaries, and fat expense accounts. The average person doesn't benefit very much.

		Agree	*Disagree*	*Don't know*
TOTAL		67	28	5
Sex	Male	62	34	3
	Female	72	22	6
Age	18-34	70	28	2
	35-54	66	28	6
	55 or older	66	27	7
Education	Less	70	20	9
	High school graduate	75	21	5
	Some college or more	60	37	3
Total household income	$ 7,500 or less	73	21	6
	7,501–12,500	79	17	4
	12,501–20,000	71	26	3
	Over $20,000	58	39	3

Respondents under 55, those with relatively higher incomes, and those that attended college are *less* inclined than older and less affluent Americans to believe that American corporations are making much higher profits than they need. Among those over 55, for example, 76% believe that business profits are too high—compared to 62% in the 35 to 54 age group and 65% among the 18–34 group. And among those saying they attended college, 58% agree that profits are excessive.

Table 24
I am going to read some statements. Are you inclined to agree or disagree? . . . All companies need to make some profits to stay in business. But the profits that businesses are making today are much higher than they need to be.

		Agree	*Disagree*	*Don't know*
TOTAL		67	28	6
Sex	Male	64	30	6
	Female	69	25	6
Age	18–34	65	30	5
	35–54	62	30	8
	Over 55	76	20	5
Education	Less High school graduate	81	16	3
	Some college or more	73	21	6
		58	37	6
Total household income	$ 7,500 or less	82	15	3
	7,501–12,500	72	23	6
	12,501–20,000	68	26	7
	Over $20,000	57	38	5

Corporate profits and personal living standards

Although they are convinced that some level of profit is needed to maintain our nation's present economic standards, Americans split almost equally as to whether growing business profits directly benefit either their own lives or those "of the average person." Some four out of ten feel that both the average person's and their own standard of living does improve when business profits grow. But an

almost equal number says the lives of most Americans are not affected one way or the other when profits increase. Only 20% or fewer see the average living standard getting worse when profits grow.

Table 25

Is it your feeling that the standard of living of the average person in this country gets better, worse, or stays about the same when the profits of business grow?

Is it your feeling that your own personal standard of living gets better, worse, or stays about the same when the profits of business grow?

	How corporate profits affect "average person's" living standard	*How corporate profits affect "your own personal" living standard*
Gets better	42%	39%
Stays the same	35	44
Gets worse	20	15
Don't know	3	2

A comparison of these responses on profits to those concerning growth indicates that Americans are not convinced that a direct cause and effect relationship exists between increased profits and a growing economy: Whereas the majority (56%) believes that the "average person" is better off when the economy grows, a smaller number (42%) say that higher business profits make the average person better off. In the same way, about four in ten (39%) think they are personally better off when profits are higher—compared to a near majority (49%) saying that economic growth improves their own lives. The number of those saying that higher corporate profits economically harm most citizens is about the same as the number who also see growth as harmful (20% vs. 17%). This fraction of society seems, for whatever reason, to reject the overwhelming American commitment to economic growth.

Table 26

	"Average Person"		*"You Personally"*	
	How growth affects "average person's" living standard	*How profits affect "average person's" living standard*	*How growth affects "your own personal" economic situation*	*How profits affect "your own personal" living standard*
Gets better	56%	42%	49%	39%
Stays the same	25	35	35	44
Gets worse	17	20	14	15
Don't know	2	3	3	2

Americans under 55 and those with relatively higher incomes and more education are more willing than others to identify their own personal welfare with that of business. Compared to an overall 39%, for example, a majority (52%) among those with household incomes of more than $20,000 feels that their own living standard gets better when the profits of business grow. Men (46%) are more likely than women (32%) to see a connection between corporate profits and their own lives.

Table 27
Is it your feeling that your own personal standard of living gets better, worse, or stays about the same when the profits of business grow?

		Gets better	*Stays the same*	*Gets worse*	*Don't know*
TOTAL		39	44	15	2
Region	Northeast	35	48	15	3
	Midwest	38	45	15	2
	South	42	40	16	2
	West	41	42	16	1
Sex	Male	46	40	14	1
	Female	32	47	17	3
Age	18–34	40	40	19	1
	35–54	46	40	11	3
	Over 55	29	53	15	3
Education	Less	28	47	23	2
	High school graduate	34	48	16	2
	Some college or more	48	38	12	2
Total household income	$ 7,500 or less	22	53	22	3
	7,501–12,500	29	52	17	2
	12,501–20,000	39	43	17	2
	Over $20,000	52	37	10	1

As discussed earlier, two out of three Americans agree that a person does better to work for a company making high profits than for one making low profits. Not surprisingly, those who themselves work for a corporation or business are much more likely than other Americans to believe that their own living standard improves when their employer's profits grow. Somewhat less than half of all respondents said they were employed by a corporation. While only 39% among all respondents see profits as personally beneficial, a clear majority (54%) among those that are corporate employees say higher profits make their own lives better.

Table 28
Is it your feeling that your own personal standard of living gets better, worse, or stays about the same when the profits of the company you work for go up? (Asked only of the 44% of total respondents saying they now work for a company.)

	(Employees Only) How profits affect "your own personal" living standard	*(All Respondents) How profits affect "your own personal" living standard*
Gets better	54%	39%
Stays the same	38	44
Gets worse	4	15
Don't know	5	2

Because they believe they themselves are directly affected by what happens to their employers, three out of four business employees say they generally try to find out whether the profits of their company are rising or declining.

Table 29
Generally, do you try to learn about whether the profits of the company for which you work are going up or going down? (Asked only of those saying they now work for a company.)

Yes, try to	77%
No, do not	13
Don't know	11

Reduce taxes on business—especially if lower taxes help to create new employment

Although they express some negative opinions about the proper level of corporate profits and the uses to which profits are put, a firm majority (51% to 40%) of Americans still says they favor reducing taxes on business. And an overwhelming number—more than eight out of ten—say they would want corporate taxes reduced *if* they knew that businesses would spend these additional funds on new plants and machinery to increase employment.

Table 30
Are you inclined to favor or oppose reducing taxes on business?

Suppose you knew for a fact that businesses, on average, would spend at least half of the money they saved from a tax cut on new machinery to make products more efficiently and on building new plants that would create jobs. Would you then be inclined to favor or oppose reducing taxes on business?

	Reduce business taxes	*Reduce if used for new plants*
Favor	51%	86%
Oppose	40	11
Don't know	8	4

The majority sentiment in favor of reducing taxes on business undoubtedly reflects the American public's commitment to economic growth. Support for lower corporate taxes is also consistent both with the conviction (discussed in Section 3) that major corporations are one institution that is, on balance, contributing to economic growth as well as with the sentiment—expressed by large minorities—that the average American is better off when corporate profits grow.

Agreement that taxes should be reduced also reflects the belief that government spending is too high and that taxes can be lowered without sacrificing needed programs. As indicated in Section 6 ("The Size and Economic Role of the Government"), most Americans believe that the federal government and its programs are larger than necessary and should be cut back. And a very large majority (eight out of ten) is convinced that the federal government tends to continue a large number of programs that are no longer useful to the citizenry of this nation.

Americans very strongly want the economy to grow and favor a high level of corporate profits *when* these profits are used in ways that encourage economic growth. Although two out of three say that profits often merely increase executive compensation, they nevertheless favor cutting corporate taxes—both because they feel that companies use at least *some* of their after-tax funds in growth-producing ways and because a high rate of taxation in itself prevents the growth they are convinced we need. If they knew that at least half of the monies freed by lower taxes would go for investments to increase productivity and employment, then virtually all Americans would say they want business taxes reduced. Put another way, a majority of Americans say they want business taxes reduced in any case simply because a large government is in itself a drag on the economy. And a significant minority that is not sure increased profits necessarily cause increased growth *would* favor higher profits—if they were convinced that these higher profits would in fact lead to more rapid growth.

5 Imports and the Balance of Payments

Introduction and Summary

At the end of 1979, the American public was strongly convinced that growth is desirable—and they said they favor growth mainly because a growing economy brings Americans more opportunities for employment. In Section 2, for example, it was noted that a near majority voluntarily and without prompting states that the most important result of a growing economy is increased employment.

This desire for economic growth and additional employment strongly influences American attitudes toward foreign imports. If Americans are ambivalent in their attitudes toward corporate profits, there is no ambivalence at all regarding the proper policy toward foreign imports and the nation's balance of payments. Public awareness of the nation's trade deficit is high, and three Americans in four believe that it presents a serious problem. Although this feeling drops among older Americans and those who are less well off and educated, almost half the public feels this problem affects them personally in a "major" way.

Americans are most inclined to blame the nation's trade deficit on unfair practices by foreign nations. But they also feel that American products are losing out because many foreign products offer superior values and because many other nations have a harder driven, better motivated work force than this country does. Trade restrictions are supported as a remedy for the trade deficit by two Americans in three; and support for restrictions rises even higher when trade protection is linked to protection for American jobs.

The public's feelings about imports and the balance of payments are not surprising when we consider the attitudes toward economic growth discussed in Section 3. Imports are seen as a major impediment to the nation's economic growth, the increase in support for trade restrictions when these are tied to American jobs is consistent with the feeling that employment is the most important benefit from growth.

Most Americans know the United States runs a trade deficit, and they believe this poses a major problem to the United States.

Respondents were asked whether the United States does in fact spend more on products and materials from other countries than other countries spend on American goods. Almost eight of ten say they are aware of the gap between exports and imports.

Table 31
Would you say that this country spends more on foreign products and materials than foreigners spend on American products, or do you feel that this is not the case?

U.S. spends more	77%
Not the case	13
Don't know	10

As to whether this gap between the amount America imports and the amount it exports is a matter for concern, more than three out of four say they feel it does pose a major problem for the entire nation. However, while a near majority (47%) believes it has a *major* effect on their own lives, 50% state that the trade deficit affects them personally only in "a minor way" (39%) or "not at all" (11%).

Table 32
Actually, the United States does spend more on foreign products and materials than it takes in. In fact, this year about 25 to 30 billion dollars more will be spent by this nation in foreign countries than foreigners will spend here. Are you inclined to feel that this represents a major problem for this country, or a minor problem, or do you feel that this really is not a problem for this country?

	How the trade deficit affects "this country"
Major problem	76%
Minor problem	16
No problem	6
Don't know	3

Still talking about the fact that we spend more on foreign products and materials than they spend here, do you feel that this situation affects you personally in a major way, a minor way, or not at all?

	How the trade deficit affects "you personally"
Major way	47%
Minor way	39
Not at all	11
Don't know	3

When comparing the attitudes of different groups of Americans, we find consensus when trade is considered as a national problem but some differences about how seriously people feel this national problem affects them personally. Among every group except one (those earning $7,500 or less) at least seven Americans in ten regard the trade deficit as a major problem for this country.

Table 33

Actually, the United States does spend more on foreign products and materials than it takes in. In fact, this year about 25 to 30 billion dollars more will be spent by this nation in foreign countries than foreigners will spend here. Are you inclined to feel that this represents a major problem for this country, or a minor problem, or do you feel this really is not a problem for this country?

		How the trade deficit affects "this country"			
		Major problem	*Minor problem*	*No problem*	*Don't know*
TOTAL		76%	16%	6%	3%
Region	Northeast	78	13	6	3
	Midwest	80	14	4	3
	South	72	19	6	3
	West	71	19	7	2
Sex	Male	75	16	8	1
	Female	76	16	4	5
Age	18-34	76	15	7	2
	35-54	75	18	5	2
	55 or over	76	14	4	5
Education	Less	74	16	3	8
	High school graduate	77	15	6	2
	Some college or more	75	17	6	2
Total household income	$ 7,500 or less	68	19	6	7
	7,501–12,500	80	15	3	2
	12,501–20,000	82	12	5	1
	Over $20,000	75	17	7	2

Older, less affluent, and less educated Americans are most likely to believe that they are not personally affected by either a decline in economic growth or by the trade deficit. And women are also somewhat less likely than men to believe that their own lives are affected. Younger Americans and those enjoying higher incomes and more education are consistently more willing to describe their own fortunes as tied to the overall performance of the economy. Just as they earlier tended to state that the level of economic growth and of corporate profits affects them personally, these groups are thus more likely to believe that the trade gap has a major effect on their own lives.

Table 34
Still talking about the fact that we spend more on foreign products and materials than they spend here, do you feel that this situation affects you personally in a major way, a minor way, or not at all?

		How the trade deficit affects "you personally"			
		Major way	*Minor way*	*Not at all*	*Don't know*
TOTAL		47	39	11	3
Sex	Male	50	37	11	3
	Female	45	40	11	4
Age	18–34	52	37	10	1
	35–54	51	39	8	3
	55 or older	39	40	15	7
Education	Less	35	34	19	12
	High school graduate	49	41	9	2
	Some college or more	50	39	10	1
Total household income	$ 7,500 or less	35	41	16	7
	7,501–12,500	45	37	14	4
	12,501–20,000	52	39	8	1
	Over $20,000	50	40	9	2

Most Americans believe that the trade deficit presents our nation with a serious problem, and many feel that the deficit harms them personally. These opinions are compatible with and strongly reflect the beliefs concerning the general economic climate in this country that are discussed in Section 3 ("What is helping and hindering growth"). The 76% saying that the trade deficit poses a "major problem" for this country is thus compatible with 63% agreeing that foreign imports hold back growth in America (Table 16) as well as with the 59% stating that growth in this country is slower than it might otherwise be because American businesses can not compete profitably with the foreign imports flooding this country (Table 17). Given these underlying beliefs that growth is desirable and that foreign imports reduce growth, it is hardly surprising that a majority considers the trade deficit a major problem.

U.S. trade deficit most often blamed on unfair competition, but foreign products are often seen as better buys

Americans are most inclined to blame the nation's trade deficit on unfair tactics used by foreign nations. When respondents were asked whether they agree or disagree with each of ten possible reasons for the nation's trade deficit, the largest number (75%) blame the dumping of "cheap goods produced by underpaid labor," and almost as many (71%) disagree with the contradictory statement that foreign workers are "more fairly" paid than Americans.

Although low foreign wages are perceived as the primary reason that foreign products cost less than comparable American goods, most Americans also blame the trade deficit on the unfair trade policies pursued by many foreign governments. More than six out of ten believe that foreign countries use unfair tariffs and other trade restrictions to keep out American goods, and a near majority (47%) also agrees that their governments assist foreign businesses to a much greater extent than our government helps American businesses.

Public recognition that the causes of the American trade deficit go beyond unfair competition is shown by responses to the statements ranked third, fourth, and fifth as causes of the trade deficit. Sixty-one percent agree that "many foreign products" are "better buys" than those made here. A comparable majority (59%) sees other nations gaining an advantage because foreign employers "drive their workers much harder than American bosses," and 55% feel that workers in some foreign countries are "more dedicated to their jobs than American workers."

None of the other reasons suggested by these ten statements was accepted as a cause of the trade deficit by a majority of the public. However, a plurality (47% to 34%) think that American trade prospects are hurt because foreign governments help businesses abroad "far more than the U.S. government helps American companies." And an almost identical plurality (46% to 37%) puts some of the blame for trade deficits on American businessmen that are not making "enough of an effort to export their products overseas."

Neither the argument having to do with foreign investment policy and more efficient "tools and machinery" nor the one solely based on more efficient tools and machinery won acceptance. The former was rejected 47% to 36%, the latter by 60% to 25%. The rejection of

these arguments suggests that the public regards American productivity problems that affect trade as stemming primarily from the human factor—a hypothesis that is supported by the majority's (55%) acceptance of the view that a cause of the trade deficit is a higher level of dedication among foreign workers.

Table 35
I am going to read a list of reasons some people say the U.S. is unable to sell as many of our products and materials to foreigners as they sell to us. Are you inclined to agree or disagree that this is one reason why foreigners are able to sell more in the U.S. than we sell in their countries?

A reason for the U.S. trade deficit	*Agree*	*Disagree*	*Don't know*
Foreign countries flood America with cheap goods produced by underpaid labor.	75%	19%	6%
Foreign countries place unfair tariffs and other obstacles in the way of American companies that try to sell in their countries.	63	18	19
Many foreign products, such as television sets and cars, are a better buy for the consumer than American products.	61	33	6
Foreign employers can produce goods more cheaply because they drive their workers much harder than American bosses drive American workers.	59	30	11
Workers in some foreign countries, like Japan and Germany, are more dedicated to their jobs than American workers.	55	34	11
Many foreign governments help businesses in those countries far more than the U.S. government helps American companies.	47	34	19
American businessmen don't make enough of an effort to export their products overseas.	46	37	17
Because some foreign governments encourage their citizens to save more than Americans, many foreign companies have more money available to invest in more efficient tools and machinery than U.S. companies do.	36	47	17
In some foreign countries, companies provide their workers with more efficient tools and machinery than American workers have.	25	60	15
Foreign companies pay workers more fairly than American companies do, and this encourages harder work in foreign countries.	18	71	11

Looking at the attitudes of different groups of Americans, we find a high level of agreement about the leading reasons for the trade deficit. Among every group, 70% or more thinks that the deficit is in part caused by "cheap goods produced by underpaid labor." Unfair tariffs are accepted as a reason for the trade deficit by 60% or more among virtually every group. Among women, Americans over 55, those with least education, and those with household incomes of $7,500 or less, however, a larger number tends to say they "don't know" whether the statement is true.

Table 36

I am going to read a list of reasons some people say that the U.S. is unable to sell as many of our products and materials to foreigners as they sell to us. Are you inclined to agree or disagree that this is one reason why foreigners are able to sell more in the U.S. than we sell in their countries?... Foreign countries flood America with cheap goods produced by underpaid labor.

Foreign countries place unfair tariffs and other obstacles in the way of American companies that try to sell in their countries.

		U.S. trade deficit caused by					
		Underpaid Foreign Labor			*Unfair Tariffs*		
		Agree	*Disagree*	*Don't know*	*Agree*	*Disagree*	*Don't know*
TOTAL		75%	16%	6%	63%	18%	19%
Region	Northeast	76	20	4	65	17	18
	Midwest	76	19	6	61	19	19
	South	76	17	7	63	17	20
	West	71	22	7	62	18	20
Sex	Male	70	25	5	68	18	14
	Female	79	14	7	58	17	24
Age	18–34	75	20	5	63	23	14
	35–54	75	20	5	67	15	19
	Over 55	75	17	9	58	15	27
Education	Less	74	17	10	53	17	30
	High school graduate	79	16	5	65	16	19
	Some college or more	72	23	5	65	20	16
Total household income	$ 7,500 or less	73	15	11	54	18	28
	7,501–12,500	77	17	6	60	19	22
	12,501–20,000	78	16	6	65	15	19
	Over $20,000	73	23	4	68	18	14

With one exception, at least half in every grouping of Americans agree with three other statements as to the cause of the trade deficit. Only forty-eight percent of those with the least education believe that foreign products are a better buy. Acceptance of the argument that some foreign goods provide better value rises sharply with education to a high of 70% among those who attended college.

Table 37

I am going to read a list of reasons some people say the U.S. is unable to sell as many of our products and materials to foreigners as they sell to us. Are you inclined to agree or disagree that this is one reason why foreigners are able to sell more in the U.S. than we sell in their countries?

Many foreign products, such as television sets and cars, are a better buy for the consumer than American products.

Foreign employers can produce goods more cheaply because they drive their workers much harder than American bosses drive American workers.

Workers in some foreign countries, like Japan and Germany, are more dedicated to their jobs than American workers.

U.S. trade deficit caused by

	Foreign Products a Better Buy			*Foreign Workers Driven Harder*			*Foreign Workers More Dedicated*		
	Agree	*Dis-agree*	*Don't know*	*Agree*	*Dis-agree*	*Don't know*	*Agree*	*Dis-agree*	*Don't know*
TOTAL	61%	33%	6%	59%	30%	11%	55%	34%	11%
Region									
Northeast	64	31	5	59	31	11	58	34	9
Midwest	59	35	6	60	30	10	57	34	10
South	57	35	8	59	29	13	57	35	13
West	70	25	6	58	32	10	56	32	12
Sex									
Male	65	31	4	57	32	12	60	30	10
Female	58	34	8	61	29	11	50	38	12
Age									
18–34	66	30	4	60	34	6	51	41	8
35–54	62	33	5	56	32	12	56	32	12
Over 55	54	36	10	61	22	17	59	27	14
Education									
Less	48	41	11	66	15	19	50	36	14
High school graduate	57	36	8	61	29	10	51	36	13
Some college or more	70	26	3	55	36	9	61	31	8
Total household income									
$ 7,500 or less	55	33	13	55	29	16	56	29	15
7,501–12,500	58	39	4	67	25	8	51	36	13
12,501–20,000	64	31	5	59	32	9	51	39	10
Over $20,000	65	32	4	57	33	10	59	33	8

Limits on foreign imports favored

Most Americans are convinced that the trade deficit presents this country with a major problem that affects them personally. As a direct consequence of this belief, large majorities say that the United States imports an excessive amount of foreign products and call for restrictions on imports to solve this imbalance. Nearly eight of ten feel that too many products made in foreign countries are sold in the United States.

Table 38
Is it your feeling that too many, too few, or the right amount of products made in foreign countries are sold here in the United States?

Too many	77%
Right amount	14
Too few	6
Don't know	4

Support for trade restrictions substantially increases when limiting imports is linked to increasing American jobs. Respondents were first asked whether they favor or opposed limiting imports of each of six types of products. Next, such limits were linked to increasing "the number of jobs American manufacturers could provide Americans" and, in the case of steel, a separate question was asked linking restrictions to military considerations. Approximately two-thirds of the public favors limiting the importing of each of the six products. Support rose to above 80% in every case when import restrictions were linked to providing more jobs for Americans. Almost as many would support limits on steel imports if this action is needed to preserve national security.

Table 39
Would you favor or oppose limiting the amount of foreign-made (product named) sold in this country?

If cutting down on foreign imports would increase the number of jobs American manufacturers could provide Americans, would you then favor or oppose limiting the amount of (product named) sold in this country?

Suppose that the military is correct when they say that importing steel to this country hurts our defense because steel is used in many major weapons. Would you then favor or oppose limiting the amount of foreign-made steel sold in this country?

	Favor	*Favor to provide more jobs for Americans*	*Favor for defense reasons*
Clothing	68%	84%	NA
Shoes	67	83	NA
Cars	66	82	NA
Television sets	65	83	NA
Steel	64	83	76
Scientific computers	63	82	NA

NA = Not asked

Throughout this study, it has been observed that Americans under 55, better educated respondents, and those enjoying higher incomes tend to express attitudes toward economic growth that often differ to some degree from those of other Americans. It is thus worth emphasizing that these same groups do hold opinions similar to other Americans about imports and the balance of payments. Although they are more concerned than other Americans about the impact of the trade deficit on their own lives (Table 34), they do tend to cite similar reasons for the existence of this deficit (Tables 36 and 37). Above all, younger and relatively more affluent Americans are just as strongly convinced as others that trade restrictions would benefit our nation's economy. This is another clear indication of the widespread support for measures to close the trade gap and protect American growth and employment.

Table 40
If cutting down on foreign imports would increase the number of jobs American manufacturers could provide Americans, would you then favor or oppose limiting the amount sold in this country?

			Favor limiting imports to increase domestic employment					
			Clothing	*Shoes*	*Steel*	*Television sets*	*Cars*	*Computers*
TOTAL			84%	83%	83%	83%	82%	82%
Age	18-34		85	84	84	83	82	81
	35-54		82	83	83	84	83	82
	55 or older		84	85	82	83	84	83
Education	Less		83	84	83	82	82	82
	High school graduate		86	85	84	86	85	83
	Some college or more		81	82	82	81	80	80
Total household income	$ 7,500 or less		81	79	80	79	77	79
	7,501-12,500		88	86	87	87	87	85
	12,501-20,000		86	85	85	86	86	84
	Over $20,000		82	83	81	82	80	81

6 The Size and Role of the Federal Government

Introduction and Summary

The American public believes that economic growth is desirable because an expanding economy provides the average American with more chances for employment and increased financial security. Because they believe this nation will—unless something is done—enjoy little economic prosperity and see little or no growth in coming years, Americans strongly support public policies perceived as leading to economic expansion and increased employment. If this will bring more capital investment that will create jobs, they are virtually unanimous in calling for lower corporate taxes, and overwhelming majorities would also restrict foreign imports to increase domestic employment.

The American public's desire for more economic growth and its pervasive concern that the economy is entering into a period of decline strongly influences attitudes toward the federal government. Americans feel that the government is the institution that is most to blame for the current lack of growth. They believe the existence of a large government inherently hinders economic growth and employment, and they agree in principle that the government is now too large and should be cut back.

So strong is the desire for more growth and employment that most respondents say they want existing governmental programs cut back even when they personally benefit from them. Americans want fewer government programs because an overwhelming majority (more than eight out of ten) believes the federal government tends to continue a large number of programs that are no longer useful. Seven out of ten thus favor "sunset laws" to automatically eliminate such obsolete programs.

This survey finds two limits, however, to the American public's desire to cut government programs in order to increase growth and employment. First, while the public wants an end to unnecessary programs that hinder growth, it simultaneously wants the government to do more when this will help business grow and create new jobs. Second, and above all, the public does not want to cut back on government expenditures that are needed to preserve the health and safety of workers and consumers or to protect the environment. By large majorities, Americans say they are convinced

that government health, safety, and environmental regulations increase the prices consumers pay. Nevertheless, equally large majorities call for stricter enforcement of government regulations protecting workers and consumers from carcinogens and from conditions and products that cause accidents. Even here, however, the public indicates it wants government actions tempered by consideration of economic consequences.

To most Americans, an expanding economy provides them with real physical and psychological goods—increased opportunities for employment, financial security, freedom from worry, and a more peaceful life. But it is equally clear that the American public continues to consider physical health an even greater good, to obtain which they are willing to sacrifice some degree of growth and income. The American worker wants more chances of employment—but not at the cost of an unhealthy workplace. The American consumer wants to cut government regulations that are no longer needed, but he is willing to pay somewhat higher prices for products that do not pose health or safety hazards to the consumer.

The consistent pattern of public attitudes toward economic growth has important public policy implications. Many Americans are likely to support policies that produce a faster rate of economic growth through reduced government spending, the ending of outmoded programs, and more efficient government. At the same time, they will be much less likely to react favorably to policies that would cut back on government programs perceived as needed to protect health, safety, or the environment.

The federal government has grown larger ... and should be cut back

Most Americans are convinced that the federal government has grown larger during the past decade: they feel that the government and its programs are now bigger than they should be and must be cut back. More than six out of ten say they feel the government has become substantially larger, and a near majority (45%) feels that it has grown a "great deal." In contrast, only a small minority (12%) thinks the government has not grown in size and activities. Not only does a majority of Americans think the past decade witnessed a rapid expansion of government activities, but an equal number also states that this rapid expansion has not been good for the country. Close to six out of ten thus believe that the government is now too large—with a substantial minority (35%) agreeing that it is now *much* larger than it ought to be.

Table 41

Is it your feeling that in the past 10 years the federal government has grown a great deal, a good deal, a fair amount, not too much, or not at all?

Thinking about the federal government and what it does, is it your feeling that the federal government is much larger than it should be, or somewhat larger than it should be, or about the right size, or somewhat smaller than it should be, or much smaller than it should be?

How the Federal government has grown

A great/good deal	**63%**
A great deal	45
A good deal	18
A fair amount	**20**
Not too much/not at all	**12**
Not too much	9
Not at all	3
Don't know	**5**

The government's present size and activities

Much/somewhat larger	**58%**
Much larger	35
Somewhat larger	23
Right size	**26**
Somewhat/much smaller	**10**
Somewhat smaller	7
Much smaller	3
Don't know	**6**

Those enjoying higher household incomes and the more educated are more likely than other Americans to say that the government is now too large. Sixty-nine percent among those attending college and 67% of those with incomes over $20,000 state that the federal government is now much larger than it should be—compared to 38% among those with the least education and 42% among those with incomes of $7,500 or less. These beliefs about the size of government are consistent with those concerning the preconditions for economic growth reported in Sections 2 and 3. The more affluent and better educated are, for example, both more likely to feel that they personally benefit from economic growth (Table 11) and that increasing government power holds back growth (Table 19). Americans under 55 are more likely to say they personally benefit from economic growth but are near the national average in believing increased government power harms the economy; they are also near the national average in saying the government is now larger than it should be. Respondents in the West are the most likely to agree that government has grown too much, and men are more inclined to this view than women.

Table 42

Thinking about the federal government and what it does, is it your feeling that the federal government is much larger than it should be, or somewhat larger than it should be, or about the right size, or somewhat smaller than it should be, or much smaller than it should be?

		Much/ somewhat larger	Right size	Somewhat/ much smaller	Don't know
TOTAL		58%	26%	10%	6%
Region	Northeast	56	26	11	8
	Midwest	52	29	14	5
	South	55	31	8	6
	West	78	14	5	3
Sex	Male	62	23	10	5
	Female	54	29	10	7
Age	18-34	58	28	10	4
	35-54	60	26	9	6
	55 or older	57	26	11	8
Education	Less	38	35	15	14
	High school graduate	55	28	11	6
	Some college or more	69	21	8	2
Total household income	$ 7,500 or less	42	34	13	11
	7,501-12,500	48	35	9	8
	12,501-20,000	62	25	10	3
	Over $20,000	67	20	9	4

Since six out of ten respondents feel the government has grown to the point that it is now larger than it ought to be, it is not surprising that a strong majority (55%) would reduce the size of the federal government and its programs. As discussed later in this section, when a list of specific government programs was later provided, respondents were more discriminating and even supported the expansion of some programs. But, when asked this neutral general question, only a small minority (14%) agrees in principle that there should be more federal programs.

The American public's demand for less government is consistent and compatible with its belief (discussed in Section 3) that a large government holds back the economic growth that directly benefits every American. Very large majorities believe both that any increase in the size of the government harms the economy and that the federal government bears the primary and largest blame for the current economic decline.

Most of those calling for less government say they would want federal programs cut back even if they now benefit from the programs that would be ended. Given the public's feeling that government is now hindering growth, these respondents may be willing to give up some government benefits because they are convinced that these losses will be temporary and offset by the long-term gains associated with economic expansion. It is also possible that in some cases their agreement was simply a way of emphasizing their belief that government programs should be cut back.

Table 43

Taking into account both the present size of the federal government and what it does, is it your feeling that the federal government and its programs should be expanded, or left about the size they are now or that the federal government and its programs should be cut back?

Expand government programs	14%
Leave as now are	28
Cut back government programs	55
Don't know	3

Base: Total public

(If respondent favors cutting back) would you favor cutting back the federal government even if the programs or services cutback hurt you personally?

Yes, cut back	72%
No, don't cut back	21
Don't know	7

Base: Those favoring cutbacks in government programs

Although a majority of Americans say they want less government, many simultaneously support more government in two areas measured by this survey. A near majority (49%) states that the government is doing "less than it should" to regulate corporations in areas such as product safety, and many (43%) also believe that the government is doing less than it should to help business grow and create new jobs and products.

Table 44

Is it your feeling that the federal government is doing more than it should, less than it should, or about the right amount to regulate major corporations in areas like product safety and other things that have to do with protecting the public?

Is it your feeling that the federal government is doing more than it should, less than it should, or about the right amount to help business grow and create new jobs and products?

	Government regulating corporations to protect the public's safety	*Government helping business to grow and create new jobs and products*
Doing more than it should	22%	16%
Doing right amount	27	28
Doing less than it should	43	50
Don't know	7	7

Relatively more affluent and better educated respondents are more willing than other Americans to express opposition to government health and safety regulations. Just as they are *more* likely to say that the federal government is larger than it should be, so also are these groups *less* anxious to see an expansion of regulations to protect consumers. In contrast residents of the Northeast are much more

likely than those in other regions to want increased regulation of health and safety: Among Northeasterners, 59% say they want such regulations expanded—a significantly larger number than among residents of the South (43%), Midwest (35%), or the West (35%).

Table 45
Is it your feeling that the federal government is doing more than it should, less than it should, or about the right amount to regulate major corporations in areas like product safety and other things that have to do with protecting the public?

		Doing more than it should	*Doing right amount*	*Doing less than it should*	*Don't know*
TOTAL		22	27	43	7
Region	Northeast	14	22	59	5
	Midwest	31	26	35	8
	South	19	30	43	8
	West	27	29	35	9
Sex	Male	26	27	42	6
	Female	19	27	45	9
Age	18–34	19	29	47	5
	35–54	27	23	45	6
	55 or older	22	28	37	13
Education	Less	15	20	50	15
	High school graduate	19	25	48	8
	Some college or more	28	32	36	4
Total household income	$ 7,500 or less	12	27	47	14
	7,501–12,500	16	28	45	11
	12,501–20,000	21	25	46	7
	Over $20,000	29	28	40	4

A substantial number of Americans agree that the federal government should do more to protect consumers. Even when asked to take current economic conditions into account, a large majority calls for more government regulations to protect the public's safety (55%). By the same token, when people take current economic conditions into account, 65% favor the government's doing more to help business grow and create jobs.

This majority approval for increased regulation of consumer safety and aid to business in creating jobs seemingly runs contrary to the consistent, pervasive belief that less rather than more government would be best for the country. As indicated below (Table 51), many Americans resolve this apparent contradiction by believing the federal government should act more efficiently and cut back on programs we no longer need, while simultaneously expanding programs that we really do need.

Table 46

Thinking about economic conditions now and in the next year or so, is it your feeling that at this time the federal government should be doing more, less, or about as much as it is doing now to regulate business in areas like product safety and other things that have to do with protecting the public?

Again thinking about current economic conditions now and in the next year or so, is it your feeling that the federal government should do more, less, or about as much as it is doing now to help business grow and create new jobs and products?

	Government regulating corporations to protect the public's safety	*Government helping business to grow and create new jobs and products*
Should do more	55%	65%
Doing right amount	18	15
Should do less	22	16
Don't know	6	5

Americans want stricter regulation to protect the health and safety of workers and consumers ... and they are willing to pay for it

Americans have no doubts that the consumer ultimately pays for government laws and regulations. More than nine out of ten assert —with only one out of a hunded Americans disagreeing—that the average product costs the consumer more because of regulation. And Americans understand the consumer costs of government regulation to be significant. A majority believes that regulation adds over 10% to consumer prices, and almost one in three is convinced that regulatory costs amount to more than 15%.

Table 47

Just as a guess, about how much of the cost of the average product would you say is due to costs added by government laws and regulations—would it be close to nothing, or less than 5% or between 5 and 10% or between 11 and 15%, or would it be higher than that?

More than 15%	28%
11 to 15%	24
5 to 10%	33
Less than 5%	7
Nothing	1
Don't know	6

Although they agree that every form of government regulation adds to consumer prices, Americans perceive environmental laws and those governing worker and consumer health and safety as considerably more burdensome than some other types of regulation. When asked about ten specific forms of regulation, almost seven out of ten agree that consumer prices are higher than they would otherwise be because of air pollution laws. Almost as many believe that consumer prices are increased by water pollution laws as well as by regulations to protect workers and consumers from cancer and from accidents. Smaller but still strong majorities believe that higher prices result from government intervention in other areas such as banking regulations (58%), laws limiting entry into an industry or profession (56%), and laws regulating prescription drugs (56%). A strong minority (45%) feels antitrust laws cause higher prices.

Table 43
I am going to read a list of different types of government regulations and ask how they affect the cost of the average product. Would you say that this type of regulation helps to increase the cost of the average product, helps decrease the cost,or has very little effect on the cost of the average product?

Type of law	*Increases consumer costs*
Air pollution	68%
Water pollution	64
To protect employees from work conditions that cause health risks like cancer	63
To protect consumers from products that cause health risks like cancer	63
To protect consumers from products that cause accidents	63
To protect employees from work conditions that cause accidents	62
Regulating banks and interest rates	58
Laws and regulations that reduce the number of firms selling a product or providing a service	56
Regulating the introduction of new prescription drugs	56
Government antitrust laws—laws limiting the size of corporations	45

Most Americans think that it is the consumer who ultimately pays for most government regulations, and they see health, safety, and environmental regulations as having the greatest impact on consumer prices. Yet many apparently believe the price well worth paying since they say they want precisely these types of regulations made more rather than less strict. Large majorities want the laws protecting workers (70%) and consumers (65%) from cancer risks

made more strict. Slightly fewer—but still strong majorities—also call for stricter laws to protect consumers (60%) and workers (56%) from accidents. Probably because they perceive a connection between pollution and diseases such as cancer, majorities also call for more rigorous control of water pollution (60%) and air pollution (52%). There is less support for expanding government regulation in nonhealth areas. Only minorities express support for stricter regulations of banks and interest rates (43%), antitrust laws (42%), and laws that limit competition (35%).

Table 49
Is it your feeling that the types of regulations should be made more strict, made less strict, or kept about the way they are now?

	More strict	*About the same*	*Less strict*	*Don't know*
To protect employees from work conditions that cause health risks like cancer	70%	20%	6%	5%
To protect consumers from products that cause health risks like cancer	65	23	8	5
To protect consumers from products that cause accidents	60	28	8	4
Water pollution	60	28	8	4
To protect employees from work conditions that cause accidents	56	30	9	6
Regulating the introduction of new prescription drugs	53	28	14	5
Air pollution	52	29	15	5
Regulating banks and interest rates	43	30	20	8
Government antitrust laws—laws limiting the size of corporations	42	33	15	10
Laws and regulations that reduce the number of firms selling a product or providing a service	35	32	24	10

For most Americans economic growth and the lowering of risks to health and the environment can be achieved at the same time. Thus they want the government to do more both to protect health and to help encourage economic growth. And large majorities want the government to be sure that actions taken to reach one of these ends do not hinder the achievement of the other and equally desirable goal. Two out of three thus say they are inclined to favor "environmental impact statements" through which the federal government

and major corporations would evaluate the effects of their actions on the nation's environment. But almost an equally large majority also favors "economic impact statements" to evaluate the probable economic impacts of government and corporate policies.

Table 50

Are you inclined to favor or oppose economic impact statements—that is, an evaluation of how major actions by the federal government or corporations affect the nation's economy?

Are you inclined to favor or oppose environmental impact statements—that is, an evaluation of how major actions by the federal government, or corporations affect the nation's environment?

	Economic impact statements	*Environmental impact statements*
Favor	59%	66%
Oppose	22	21
Don't know	19	13

The American public is strongly in favor of a faster rate of economic growth. Since they single out the government as the factor most responsible for holding back growth, most Americans thus call for an overall reduction in the size and number of government programs except for health and safety programs. Over eight in ten agree that the federal government tends to continue a large number of programs that are no longer useful, and almost seven out of ten favor "sunset laws" that would close down government agencies after a certain number of years unless their existence were specifically authorized by a new law.

Table 51

Generally speaking, is it your feeling that the federal government is paying enough attention to deciding whether its programs are still useful, or do you feel that federal government tends to continue a large number of programs that are no longer useful?

Paying enough attention to usefulness of programs	12%
Continuing no-longer-useful programs	82
Don't know	7

Sunset laws require that government agencies go out of existence after a certain number of years unless a new law is passed specifically authorizing each one to continue. Generally speaking, are you inclined to favor or oppose sunset laws?

Favor sunset	67%
Oppose sunset laws	21
Don't know	12

7 Technical Appendix

Composition of the two matched samples on which data in this report are based:

			Sample A	Sample B
	TOTAL		1,000	1,000
Demographic composition of the sample	Region	Northeast	233	234
		Midwest	275	274
		South	326	328
		West	166	164
	Sex	Male	503	478
		Female	497	522
	Age	18–34	404	364
		35–54	326	325
		Over 55	260	294
		Refused	10	17
	Education	Less	138	147
		High school graduate	403	428
		Some college or more	450	416
		Some college	206	173
		College graduate	168	189
		Graduate school	76	54
		Refused	9	9
	Total household income	$ 7,500 or less	157	150
		7,501–12,500	142	163
		12,501–20,000	262	234
		Over $20,000	356	382
		Refused	83	71

Sampling error

At the 95% confidence level, sampling error (stated in percentage points) for individual percentages in each sample, is estimated to be:

		15% or 85%	25% or 75%	35% or 65%	50%
TOTAL		2.2	2.7	3.0	3.1
Region	Northeast	4.6	5.6	6.1	6.4
	Midwest	4.2	5.1	5.6	5.9
	South	3.9	4.7	5.2	5.4
	West	5.4	6.6	7.3	7.6
Sex	Male	3.2	3.8	4.2	4.4
	Female	3.1	3.8	4.1	4.3
Age	18-34	3.6	4.3	4.8	5.0
	35-54	3.9	4.7	5.2	5.4
	Over 55	4.2	5.1	5.6	5.9
Education	Less	5.9	7.1	7.8	8.2
	High school graduate	3.4	4.2	4.6	4.8
	Some college or more	3.4	4.1	4.5	4.7
Total household income	$ 7,500 or less	5.7	6.9	7.6	7.9
	7,501-12,560	5.7	6.9	7.6	7.9
	12,501-20,000	4.4	5.4	5.9	6.2
	Over $20,000	3.6	4.4	4.9	5.1

The questionnaires

Questions administered in the "A" sample precede those administered to the "B" sample. In each case, questions appear in the order they were read to respondents. Except where otherwise indicated, percentages are based on all persons interviewed for each sample.

The questionnaire for Sample A

Ask everyone

Generally speaking, would you say that things are going extremely well in this country, pretty well, pretty badly, or very badly?

Extremely well	2%
Pretty well	35
Pretty badly	45
Very badly	16
Don't know	2

Have you ever heard or read the phrase *economic growth*, or is this a term you are not familiar with?

Have heard/read of	68%
Not familiar with/Don't know	32

Ask those who express familiarity with the phrase *economic growth*

(If familiar with the term) What would you say the term *economic growth* means—how would you define it? (Respondents answered in their own words.)

Gave definition	**55%**
Economy is growing, expanding, increasing	19
Increase in gross national product	8
Growth in business	8
Increased buying power and income	6
Stability of the dollar	5
High rate of employment	5
Increased productivity	4
Stable economic situation, sound growth	4
Prosperity	2
Any mention of economic trends over several years	1
Proper efficient use of resources	1
All other comments related to the economy	4
Nonresponsive comments	**1**
Don't know	**11**
Not asked question because not familiar with term *economic growth*	**32**

Base: Percentages based on total sample

(If familiar with the term) What phrase would you say describes the opposite of *economic growth*? (Respondents answered in their own words.)

Gave definition	**54%**
Recession	22
Depression	17
Economic decline, stagnation	13
Inflation	4
Lower standard of living	1
Unemployment	1
Lowered productivity	1
Lowered production	1
High rate of bankruptcy	1
Government overspending	1
All other comments related to the economy*	2
Nonresponsive comments	**2**
Don't know	**14**
Not asked because not familiar with term *economic growth*	**32**

*Includes all categories with less than 0.5% in mentions

Base: Percentages based on total sample

For the purpose of our conversation, let's define economic growth as a growing and expanding economy. I mean growing and expanding overall, even though there may be temporary recessions or slowdowns. What would you say are the one or two most important things that happen when the economy is growing and expanding? Or, to put it another way, what are the one or two most important results of a growing economy?
(Respondents answered in their own words.)

Ask everyone

	What happens when the economy grows
Individuals	**63%**
More employment	44
Better balance between personal income and spending	13
Increased buying power	12
General rise in living standard	9
People are optimistic	7
Other responses mentioning how people benefit	4
Business	**17**
Expanded/increased business	8
Greater productivity	4
More capital available	3
Increased trade with other countries	3
Other responses mentioning how the business benefits	*
Government	**3**
Budget can be balanced	*
More confidence in government	1
Other responses mentioning how the government benefits	2
General economy	**12**
Prosperity	5
Stabilizing inflation	5
Stabilizing dollar	2
Don't know	**21**

*Note: Fewer than .05%.

And when the economy does not grow, what would you say are the one or two most important things that happen? (Respondents answered in their own words.)

Individuals	**65%**
Unemployment	48
Decreased buying power	14
Lower standard of living	11
Discontent restlessness	9
High prices	7
Increased crime	4
Other responses mentioning how people [illegible]	2
Business	**8**
Business failures	4
Higher interest rates for business	4
Other responses mentioning problems for business	1
Government	**5**
Lack of confidence in government	5
General economy	**34**
Inflation	14
Financial standstill	9
Recession	9
Depression	5
Don't know	**17**

As you know, the country is in a recession or economic slowdown right now. Thinking back to the two or three years *before* this recession or slowdown, is it your feeling that the economy was then growing a great deal, a good deal, a fair amount, not too much?

A great good deal	**26%**
A great deal	10
A good deal	16
Fair amount	**43**
Not too much not at all	**26**
Not too much	22
Not at all	4
Don't know	**5**

Is it your feeling that in the next five years the American economy will grow a great deal, a good deal, a fair amount, not too much, or not at all?

A great good deal	**19%**
A great deal	8
A good deal	11
Fair amount	**29**
Not too much not at all	**46**
Not too much	34
Not at all	13
Don't know	**6**

Why do you feel the way you do about economic growth in this country—what is slowing down growth in this country and what is encouraging the economy to grow? (Respondents answered in their own words.)

Respondents volunteering factors slowing growth	**69%**
Inflation decreased buying power	25
Big, inefficient government	16
Energy situation, foreign oil	13
Higher interest rates	7
Unemployment greater unemployment	6
Government spending	6
Not enough demand for goods	4
Labor problems	3
Dependency on foreign government for products materials (other than oil)	3
Dollar devalued, worth less	3
Spendthrift Americans	3
Not enough new business	2
Inefficiency in production	2
Apathy	2

Why do you feel the way you do about economic growth in this country—what is slowing down growth in this country and what is encouraging the economy to grow? (Respondents answered in their own words.)

Respondents volunteering facters encouraging growth	**29%**
Political change, new leaders	4
Growing employment	4
Development of new industry	3
President taking control president has power to control inflation	2
People helping the economy grow—all other reasons mentioned	4
Government helping the economy grow—all other reasons mentioned	3
Business helping the economy grow—all other reasons mentioned	
Nonresponsive comments	**3**
Don't know	**18**
Business—all responses mentioning business's helping growth (net)	13
Business—all responses mentioning business's holding back growth (net)	7
Government—all responses mentioning government's helping growth (net)	10
Government—all responses mentioning government's holding back growth (net)	27
People—all responses mentioning people's helping growth (net)	6
People—all responses mentioning people's holding back growth (net)	7

Note: This table includes all responses mentioned by two percent or more.

Thinking about how much the economy should grow in the next five years, is it your feeling that it would be best for this country if the economy grew a great deal, a good deal, a fair amount, not too much, or not at all in the next five years?	**A great/good deal**	**41%**
	A great deal	20
	A good deal	21
	Fair amount	**42**
	Not too much/not at all	**13**
	Not too much	11
	Not at all	2
	Don't know	**4**
Is it your feeling that the standard of living of the average person in this country gets better, worse, or stays about the same when the economy grows?	Gets better	56%
	Stays the same	25
	Gets worse	17
	Don't know	2
Is it your feeling that your own personal economic situation gets better, worse, or stays about the same when the economy grows?	Gets better	49%
	Stays the same	35
	Gets worse	14
	Don't know	3

I am going to read down a list of items. As I do, please say "yes" for those that you feel generally happen when the economy is growing and expanding. For others, say "no."

Now I'm going to read down that list of items again. This time only say "yes" to those things that happen to people like you when the economy is growing and expanding. Remember, say "yes" only if you feel an item will affect you personally. Otherwise, say "no."

	Generally happens	*Generally happens to "people like you"*
Business (Businesses that affect me) can afford to buy better machines that make products more efficiently	83%	74%
More jobs are available	81	64
Wages and salaries are higher	77	71
Taxes are higher	75	77
Better jobs are available	74	64
Prices are higher	73	77
There's more pollution and crowding	73	64
There are more or bigger government programs (that provide money for people like me)	61	40
The way people (like me) live is more peaceful	51	63
Worse jobs are available	32	29
Fewer jobs are available	27	27
Prices are lower	22	20
Wages and salaries are lower	19	20
Taxes are lower	18	18

I am going to read you some statements. Are you inclined to agree or disagree with the statement I just read?

[If agree]
Are you inclined to feel the condition I just described slows down economic growth in this country, or don't you feel this is the case?

	Agree	Disagree	Don't know	Slows growth	Does not	Don't know	Not asked
The government spends more than it takes in and borrows too much.	84%	11%	5%	65%	13%	6%	16%
Inflation and taxes are greatly reducing saving by individuals.	82	15	3	70	8	3	18
Too many Americans just don't like to work very hard anymore.	71	26	3	59	9	3	29
American businesses can't make a profit competing with the cheaper foreign imports that are flooding the country.	67	29	4	59	6	3	33
Businessmen are more afraid to take risks than they used to be.	66	29	5	56	8	2	34
A few big companies divide up business between them, and there is just not much competition anymore.	60	34	6	46	10	4	40
High taxes leave businessmen with too little money to invest in new equipment and new products.	53	40	7	44	6	3	47
Government regulations make it necessary for businesses to devote so much money to things like cleaning up the environment and improving product safety that there is not enough money left for new equipment.	47	46	8	38	6	2	53

Base: Total public

I am going to read down a list of items. As I do, I want you to tell me whether each one is helping the nation's economy grow, or holding back the nation's economic growth, or is having very little effect on the nation's economic growth. Is it your feeling that these items are helping this nation's economy grow, or holding growth back, or not having much of an effect on the growth of the nation's economy?

	Helping economic growth	*Holding down growth*	*Little effect*	*Don't know*
The current state of American technology, know-how, and innovation	63%	13%	15%	10%
Major corporations	43	33	15	9
The current level of productivity in this country—how many man hours it takes to produce the average product	34	37	17	12
Labor unions	28	49	13	11
The amount of taxes the average business pays	27	41	23	9
Environmental protection laws and regulations	25	41	27	8
The amount of taxes the average person pays	24	51	19	5
Government spending	20	62	13	6
Materials and products imported from foreign nations	18	63	14	6
Government regulation (other than environmental laws)	14	51	22	12
The size of the federal government	12	54	24	9
The energy situation	8	81	7	4
Inflation	5	86	6	3

I want to ask you about what is called productivity—the number of man hours and the amount of resources it takes to produce the average product. Is it your feeling that the productivity level in this country is very high, pretty high, fair, pretty low, or very low?	**High**	**37%**
	Very high	9
	Pretty high	28
	Fair	**40**
	Low	**19**
	Pretty low	14
	Very low	5
	Don't know	**5**
Is it your feeling that the level of productivity in this country is getting better, worse, or staying about the same?	Getting better	14%
	Staying about the same	43
	Getting worse	41
	Don't know	3
Is it your feeling that the standard of living of the average person in this country gets better, worse, or stays about the same when the profits of business grow?	Gets better	42%
	Stays the same	35
	Gets worse	20
	Don't know	3
Is it your feeling that your own personal standard of living gets better, worse, or stays about the same when the profits of business grow?	Gets better	39%
	Stays the same	44
	Gets worse	15
	Don't know	2
Are you working now? Are you working for a company now?	Yes now working for a company	44%
	No don't know	56%
	Ask those now working for a company	
Thinking about that company's profits, is it your feeling that your own personal standard of living gets better, worse, or stays about the same when the profits of the company you work for go up?	Gets better	54%
	Stays the same	38
	Gets worse	4
	Don't know	5
Generally, do you try to learn about whether the profits of the company for which you work are going up or going down?	Yes, try to	77%
	No, do not	13
	Don't know	11

	Ask everyone	Agree	Disagree	Don't know
I am going to read some statements. Are you inclined to agree or disagree?	When the economy is booming, most of the increase is kept by business in the form of higher profits, higher executive salaries, and fat expense accounts. The average person doesn't benefit very much.	67%	28%	5%
	When the economy goes down, business keeps its profits high and cuts jobs and wages.	67	29	4
	All companies need to make some profits to stay in business, but the profits that businesses are making today are much higher than they need to be.	67	28	6
	Without high profits, business cannot invest in the new plants and equipment needed to keep our economy going.	66	29	5
	A person does better working for a company making high profits than working for a company making low profits.	63	28	9

The questionnaire for Sample B

Ask everyone

When the power of corporations in this country increases over a long period of time, do you think that this helps the American economy or hurts it, or do you feel that an increase in the power of corporations has very little impact on the economy?	Hurts the economy	45%
	Helps the economy	27
	Little impact	13
	Don't know	15
When the power of most labor unions in this country increases over a long period of time, do you think that this helps the American economy or hurts it, or do you feel that an increase in the power of labor unions has very little impact on the economy?	Hurts the economy	56%
	Helps the economy	23
	Little impact	13
	Don't know	8
When the power of the federal government in this country increases over a long period of time, do you think that this helps the American economy or hurts it, or do you feel that an increase in the power of the federal government has very little impact on the economy?	Hurts the economy	54%
	Helps the economy	20
	Little impact	17
	Don't know	9
Is it your feeling that the federal government is doing more than it should, less than it should, or about the right amount to regulate major corporations in areas like product safety and other things that have to do with protecting the public?	Doing more than it should	22%
	Doing right amount	27
	Doing less than it should	43
	Don't know	7
Is it your feeling that the federal government is doing more than it should, less than it should, or about the right amount to help business grow and create new jobs and products?	Doing more than it should	16%
	Doing right amount	28
	Doing less than it should	50
	Don't know	7

Thinking about economic conditions now and in the next year or so, is it your feeling that at this time the federal government should be doing more, less, or about as much as it is doing now to regulate business in areas like product safety and other things that have to do with protecting the public?	Should do more	55%
	Doing right amount	18
	Should do less	22
	Don't know	6
Again thinking about current economic conditions now and in the next year or so, is it your feeling that the federal government should do more, less, or about as much as it is doing now to help business grow and create new jobs and products?	Should do more	65%
	Doing right amount	15
	Should do less	16
	Don't know	5
Thinking about the federal government and what it does, is it your feeling that the federal government is much larger than it should be, or somewhat larger than it should be, or about the right size, or somewhat smaller than it should be, or much smaller than it should be?	**Much somewhat larger**	**58%**
	Much larger	35
	Somewhat larger	23
	Right size	**26**
	Somewhat much smaller	**10**
	Somewhat smaller	7
	Much smaller	3
	Don't know	**6**
Is it your feeling that in the past 10 years the federal government has grown a great deal, a good deal, a fair amount, not too much, or not at all?	**A great good deal**	**63%**
	A great deal	45
	A good deal	18
	A fair amount	**20**
	Not too much not at all	**12**
	Not too much	9
	Not at all	3
	Don't know	**5**
Taking into account both the present size of the federal government and what it does, is it your feeling that the federal government and its programs should be expanded, or left about the size they are now or that the federal government and its programs should be cut back?	Expand government programs	14%
	Leave as now are	28
	Cut back government programs	55
	Don't know	3

Ask those who favor expanding government programs

Would you favor expanding the federal government even if the programs or services you want expanded did not benefit you personally?

Yes	80%
No	12
Don't know	8

Ask those who favor cutting back governmental programs

Would you favor cutting back the federal government even if the programs or services cut back hurt you personally?

Yes, cut back	72%
No, don't cut back	21
Don't know	7

Ask everyone

I am going to read a list of different types of government regulations and ask how they affect the cost of the average product. Would you say that this type of regulation helps to increase the cost of the average product, helps decrease the cost, or has very little effect on the cost of the average product?

	Increases	Decreases	Little effect	Don't know
Air pollution	68%	7%	18%	7%
Water pollution	64	7	22	8
To protect employees from work conditions that cause health risks like cancer	63	7	22	8
To protect consumers from products that cause health risks like cancer	63	6	25	6
To protect consumers from products that cause accidents	63	7	23	7
To protect employees from work conditions that cause accidents	62	8	25	6
Regulating banks and interest rates	58	13	18	12
Laws and regulations that reduce the number of firms selling a product or providing a service	56	12	22	10
Regulating the introduction of new prescription drugs	56	12	23	10
Government antitrust laws – laws limiting the size of corporations	45	15	25	15

Is it your feeling that these types of regulations should be made more strict, made less strict, or kept about the way they are now?

	More strict	Would stay the same	Less strict	Don't know
To protect employees from work conditions that cause health risks like cancer	70%	20%	6%	5%
To protect consumers from products that cause health risks like cancer	65	23	8	5
To protect consumers from products that cause accidents	60	28	8	4
Water pollution	60	28	8	4
To protect employees from work conditions that cause accidents	56	30	9	6
Regulating the introduction of new prescription drugs	54	28	14	5
Air pollution	52	29	15	5
Regulating banks and interest rates	43	30	20	8
Government antitrust laws — laws limiting the size of corporations	42	34	15	10
Laws and regulations that reduce the number of firms selling a product or providing a service	35	32	24	10

Generally speaking, is it your feeling that the federal government is paying enough attention to deciding whether its programs are still useful, or do you feel that the federal government tends to continue a large number of programs that are no longer useful?

Paying enough attention to usefulness of programs	12%
Continuing no-longer-useful programs	82
Don't know	7

Sunset laws require that government agencies go out of existence after a certain number of years unless a new law is passed specifically authorizing each one to continue. Generally speaking, are you inclined to favor or oppose sunset laws?

Favor sunset laws	67%
Oppose sunset laws	21
Don't know	12

Just as a guess, about how much of the cost of the average product would you say is due to costs added by government laws and regulations—would it be close to nothing, or less than 5%, or between 5 and 10%, or between 11 and 15%, or would it be higher than that?	More than 15%	28%
	11 to 15%	24
	5 to 10%	33
	Less than 5%	7
	Nothing	1
	Don't know	6
Are you inclined to favor or oppose economic impact statements—that is, an evaluation of how major actions by the federal government or corporations affect the nation's economy?	Favor	59%
	Oppose	22
	Don't know	19
Are you inclined to favor or oppose environmental impact statements—that is, an evaluation of how major actions by the federal government or corporations affect the nation's environment?	Favor	66%
	Oppose	21
	Don't know	13
Are you inclined to favor or oppose reducing taxes on business?	Favor	51%
	Oppose	40
	Don't know	8
Suppose you knew for a fact that businesses, on average, would spend at least half of the money they saved from a tax cut on new machinery to make products more efficiently and on building new plants that would create jobs. Would you then be inclined to favor or oppose reducing taxes on business?	Favor	86%
	Oppose	11
	Don't know	4
Is it your feeling that too many, too few, or the right amount of products made in foreign countries are sold here in the United States?	Too many	77%
	Right amount	14
	Too few	6
	Don't know	4

		Favor	Oppose	Don't know
Would you favor or oppose limiting the amount of foreign-made items sold in this country?	Other clothing	68%	28%	4%
	Shoes	67	29	4
	Cars	66	31	4
	Television sets	65	31	4
	Steel	64	29	7
	Scientific computers	63	30	7

		Favor	Oppose	Don't know
If cutting down on foreign imports would increase the number of jobs American manufacturers could provide Americans, would you then favor or oppose limiting the amount sold in this country?	Other clothing	84%	13%	3%
	Shoes	83	13	4
	Steel	83	13	5
	Television sets	83	12	4
	Cars	82	14	4
	Scientific computers	82	14	5

Suppose that the military is correct when they say that importing steel to this country hurts our defense because steel is used in many major weapons. Would you then favor or oppose limiting the amount of foreign-made steel sold in this country?	Favor	76%
	Oppose	17
	Don't know	7
Would you say that this country spends more on foreign products and materials than foreigners spend on American products, or do you feel that this is not the case?	U.S. spends more	77%
	Not the case	13
	Don't know	10
Actually, the United States does spend more on foreign products and materials than it takes in. In fact, this year about 25-30 billion dollars more will be spent by this nation in foreign countries than foreigners will spend here. Are you inclined to feel that this represents a major problem for this country, or a minor problem, or do you feel that this really is not a problem for this country?	Major problem	76%
	Minor problem	16
	No problem	6
	Don't know	4
Still talking about the fact that we spend more on foreign products and materials than they spend here, do you feel that this situation affects you personally in a major way, a minor way, or not at all?	Major way	47%
	Minor way	39
	Not at all	11
	Don't know	3

I am going to read a list of reasons that some people say that the U.S. is unable to sell as many of our products and materials to foreigners as they sell to us. Are you inclined to agree or disagree that this is one reason why foreigners are able to sell more in the U.S. than we well in their countries?

	Agree	Disagree	Don't know
Foreign countries flood America with cheap goods produced by underpaid labor.	75%	19%	6%
Foreign countries place unfair tariffs and other obstacles in the way of American companies that try to sell in their countries.	63	18	19
Many foreign products, such as television sets and cars, are a better buy for the consumer than American products.	61	33	6
Foreign employers can produce goods more cheaply because they drive their workers much harder than American bosses drive American workers.	59	30	11
Workers in some foreign countries, like Japan and Germany, are more dedicated to their jobs than American workers.	55	34	11
Many foreign governments help businesses in those countries far more than the U.S. government helps American companies.	47	34	19
American businessmen don't make enough of an effort to export their products overseas.	46	37	17
Because some foreign governments encourage their citizens to save more than Americans, many foreign companies have more money available to invest in more efficient tools and machinery than U.S. companies do.	36	47	17
In some foreign countries, companies provide their workers with more efficient tools and machinery than American workers have.	25	60	15
Foreign companies pay workers more fairly than American companies do, and this encourages harder work in foreign countries.	18	71	11